

DAILY EXPRESS
OPINION

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**Not serious,
only desperate**

AS WE come up to the Budget we also complete two years of Mr James Callaghan's Prime Ministership. It is worth considering what the judgment on those years ought to be.

On the purely political front, Mr Callaghan performs well. He is restrained, soft-spoken and keen to avoid behaving like a political gladiator.

However, while smooth makes for strong (and this Prime Minister is about as abrasive as rose hip syrup), no bedside manner, however soothing, is going to cure the patient's organic illness.

We have been encouraged to believe that the worst of our economic troubles were over. North Sea oil is flowing, inflation is down, the Chancellor is scheduled to make tax cuts in his Budget.

One can hear the Prime Minister in that mild West of England voice of his saying, "We don't claim to have solved everything but, you know, we are on the mend."

We are not! Britain's problem from which most of the others—like unemployment and failure to compete abroad—are symptoms, is productivity. Or rather, it is unproductivity.

How many people realise that we are producing less than we did in the three-day week of 1974? The great loss—making corporations like Leyland and British Steel are absorbing the sweet syrup of uncovenanted oil like hungry and devouring wasps.

We are just rich enough by accident not to be shatteringly poor by our own exertions.

We have some of the worst unemployment figures to be found in the industrialised world and yet we are disguising even worse unemployment by overmanning, and by payrolling Local Government and the Lower Civil Service. Our share of the world market stands at an all-time low, and we have achieved zero growth.

James Callaghan did not create these evils. They have been twenty years a-making. However, his voice assures us when we have most reason to be alarmed. The bedside manner belongs to a cosmetic surgeon.

**A good pull-up
for motorists**

"IF I did this trip often I would take sandwiches." That comment, which comes not from a professional gourmet but from an ordinary wayfarer, is a comment on the motorway service station with all the finality of an epitaph.

There is something not quite human about service stations. They are solid and impressive structures but look rather as if one expects the first settlements on the moon to be.

Motorway travellers are not asking for much. But surely quite simple food could be cooked more satisfactorily, a better check kept on the quality of materials used and some effort made to render a necessarily utilitarian service more pleasant and agreeable.

Without selling tea by the pint, there are a fair number of tips that could be taken from that rough but useful institution—the old-fashioned transport café.

KEEP THE N-BOMB!

THE neutron bomb is the least barbaric, the least uncivilised, the least inhumane of the entire range of nuclear weapons. For this reason alone it should receive some kind of welcome, however lukewarm, from all moralists who are not pacifists.

Quite the reverse has occurred. Because it can be said of the neutron bomb that it kills people and leaves buildings alone, it has been held to be uniquely horrible.

But is this so different from more traditional weapons?

When the first man picked up a stone and bashed the head of a fellow man, it was the man he wanted to damage, not his mud hut.

Daggers, and knives and swords, spears and lances, bows and arrows, crossbows, muskets, rifles and machine guns were made to kill or wound men.

Wars are won by killing men, not by knocking down buildings. Countries are defended by repelling invaders and by invading territory of the attackers. Conquests are secured by armies of occupation.

It was only the development of the aerial bomb that made civilians targets to be attacked. In this respect warfare has become notably more barbarous in the 20th century.

But the neutron bomb, though infinitely more terrifying than swords or arrows, is a weapon in the traditional mould. It is designed to be used against armies rather than civilians.

The bomb (which is not

It's the least uncivilised of nuclear weapons

By
**GEORGE
GALE**

It is the best nuclear weapon we have got.

But from a strategic and political standpoint it is the worst nuclear weapon we have got—because we have not yet got it in deployable numbers, and because if the Soviet Union has its way, President Carter will be persuaded into ensuring that we do not get it at all.

The Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact deploys conventional forces against NATO in the rough ratio of three to one. It has sufficient tanks to sweep through Europe to the Atlantic and North Sea. NATO's conventional forces could not stop that sweep.

Only a nuclear response directed at the Soviet Union's prime targets—massive retaliation—could possibly halt the tanks.

But the Soviet Union counters this nuclear retaliation with its own parallel capacity, which now includes the new SS/20 missiles targeted upon the chief cities of Western Europe.

It has its long-range missiles capable of reaching the United States. It has deep shelters for its own key industrial workers.

Its leaders could, therefore, and very well might, launch a conventional attack knowing that, whatever the devastation, their armies would cover the entire European Continent and utterly dominate the Eurasian land-mass.

There would then be only one Super Power—and it would not be the United States.

The neutron bomb could provide Western Europe with a satisfactory defence against such an attack. It is a vital necessity to the security of all the nations of NATO except, perhaps, the United States.

An isolated United States, turned into a devastated fortress, might survive, but its dominant power would have gone forever.

Why, then, with these moral, strategic and political advantages of the neutron bomb, does President Carter dither and hesitate and begin to look like abandoning it?

Powerful

Partly, alas, because it is becoming all too evident that weakness and indecision is in his nature.

Partly it is because he has been misled as to the "uniquely horrible" nature of the weapon and partly because he does not want to offend the Russians and endanger the various arms limitation negotiations.

The Soviet Union's propagandist and diplomatic campaign against the neutron bomb has been powerful and brilliant.

It has demonstrated Moscow's fear of the weapon and that fear is, in fact, a powerful argument in its favour. We have seen, in Africa, President Carter doing much what the Russians want him to do.

We now appear to be about to see President Carter doing in Europe what the Russians want him to do. The West Germans want the neutron bomb for the sake of their own security.

So do we. Herr Schmidt and Mr Callaghan are in full agreement. Their duty is therefore clear. They should insist that President Carter orders the bomb's manufacture and deployment.

If Carter then refuses, Germany and Britain would be forced into doing the job themselves.

It would be very expensive for us. But no price is too high when the alternative is Russian occupation.

UNDER-18 PLATFORM

My plan to stop bank robberies

I HAVE thought of an idea which could help cut down robberies on security vans.

The idea is that you have a docking hatch which the security van backs on to and then locks into position so there is a direct tube into the bank.

The van has half the tube and the bank the other half. So then the money can be passed through in complete safety.

The guards can work without a fear of being attacked.

D. HOUSER (age 12)
4 Amberley Close,
Luton, Beds.

Cycle lanes

NOW that the suicidal skateboarders are getting skateboard parks built for them it seems only fair to suggest that a little more should be done for cyclists, who would also like safer

conditions. Cyclists were banned from footpaths and pavements in the 1930's when it was safer on the roads. Now we have faster cars, and more of them.

Separate lanes on roads could be arranged with a little paint, and would go a long way.

If a car hits a cyclist you know who comes off worst!

KEVIN GIBBS (age 13)
4, New Park Avenue,
Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex.

